

\* C O N F I D E N T I A L \*

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NOVEMBER 27, A DRA ANTONOV AIRCRAFT WAS UNABLE TO PENETRATE THE KHOST AIR SPACE BECAUSE OF INTENSE GROUND FIRE AND AS A CONSEQUENCE RETURNED TO KABIL WITHOUT DROPPING ITS CARGO OF FOOD.

3. REPORTS (REFTEL A, PARAS 5 AND 16A) POINTED TO GROWING FOOD SHORTAGES IN KHOST BECAUSE OF THE CLOSURE OF THE PRINCIPAL ROUTE TO PAKISTAN. A SEPARATE REPORT CLAIMED THAT THE ROAD FROM GARDEZ TO KHOST ALSO HAD BEEN BLOCKED. MORE RECENTLY, AN AFGHAN SOURCE CLAIMED THAT A BRIDGE NEAR KHOST HAD BEEN RENDERED IMPASSIBLE BY MUJAHIDIN ACTION.

4. LARGE SOVIET CONVOYS HAVE LEFT KABIL ROUTE FOR KHOST-GARDEZ IN THE LAST TEN DAYS, INCLUDING OVER 700 VEHICLES ON NOVEMBER 20 AND A FOUR-HUNDRED VEHICLE COLUMN ON NOVEMBER 28.

5. ACCORDING TO SOURCES, CASUALTIES BROUGHT TO KABIL FROM FIGHTING IN PAKTIA IN THE LAST TEN DAYS HAVE TOLD OF INTENSE FIGHTING IN THE KHOST AREA.

6. FINALLY, AS REPORTED REF H, SOVIET SUKHOI 25'S HAVE BEGUN FLYING OPERATIONAL MISSIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF KHOST, OUT OF KABIL AIRPORT. THE UNPRECEDENTED DEPLOYMENT OF SUKHUI'S TO KABIL IN APPARENT SUPPORT OF SOVIET OPERATIONS IN THE KHOST AREA AND THEIR NEARLY HOURLY, BOMB-LADEN DEPARTURES UNDERSCORE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE FIGHTING IN THE DIRECTION OF KHOST.

7. COMMENT: SHOULD THE MUJAHIDIN SUCCEED IN PLACING KHOST UNDER A PROTRACTED SIEGE, OR, MORE REMOTELY, SHOULD KHOST FALL TO THE MUJAHIDIN, IT WOULD REPRESENT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MUJAHIDIN VICTORIES OF THE WAR.

8. MOSCOW MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. GLASSMAN  
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